

GERMANY'S GENERALS STAGE A COMEBACK

The Terms for Their Cooperation with the West

PETER DE MENDELSSOHN

IN MARCH of this year there appeared in Western Germany a new monthly called *Europäische Sicherheit* ("European Security"), subtitled "A Review of the Military Sciences." The first magazine in postwar Germany to deal exclusively with military matters, its publishers are the long-established firm Ernst Siegfried Mittler, which after the First World War held almost a publishing monopoly in the military field. Under its imprint appeared memoirs of many prominent generals; later its list had a fair share of Nazi items; and more recently it has published the war books of Ernst Jünger and other right-wing ideologues. The magazine's editor is one Martin H. Sommerfeldt, who published a fulsome biography of Goering in 1933, and followed it up with a number of other books in praise of the Hitler regime.

The magazine's editorial offices are at Bonn, with a postoffice box in the Bundeshaus, the Federal parliament building. Its first number prints part of a recent speech by

IN A flood of recent books, Germany's professional soldiers are seeking once again to foster the legend of an honorable and far-seeing army "betrayed" by the politicians, while at the same time carrying water on both epaulets as to such crucial questions as their own loyalty to Hitler. In the context of German rearmament, this development is a matter of great importance to the democratic world. PETER DE MENDELSSOHN, who here reports and analyzes the German generals' version of recent history, has published political analyses in magazines here and abroad, and is the author of numerous books, including *Japan's Political Warfare* (1944), *The Hours and the Centuries* (1944), and *The Nuremberg Documents* (1946). He has also served as press officer with Allied Supreme Headquarters in Europe during the war and with the occupation authorities in Germany. Mr. de Mendelssohn was born in Munich in 1908 and attended the University of Berlin.

Dr. Adenauer, the Federal Chancellor, welcoming the French plan for a European army. The same number also contains appreciations of Generals Hans Speidel and Adolf Heusinger, the two German military experts representing the Bonn government in its current discussions with the Western powers on the German contribution towards Western defense. And the Mittler house has also just put out a biography of General Eisenhower, by Heinz von Arndt, that openly attempts to create sympathy among Germans, especially ex-soldiers, for the man whom "we have so far known only as an enemy and conqueror."

Puzzling? Perhaps not more so than the question of German rearmament itself, and certainly not more than might have been expected when the German generals made their bow on the postwar scene.

NOTHING at all was heard from German military experts during the first postwar years. Military literature in the technical sense was prohibited by the occupying powers, but it was not even circulated secretly—simply because there was neither need for nor interest in it. Not even war memoirs of a comparatively innocent and sentimental nature appeared in any number. This was an indication of the degree to which the German army and all it stood for had become discredited among the Germans themselves, the veterans included. It seemed clear that the German military leaders of the Second World War—unlike those of the First—would have trouble in reestablishing enough prestige among their former troops to give them a claim on their further trust and loyalty.

In the spring of 1949, the first attempt at a comeback by the generals was made. There appeared, in Munich, a 64-page pamphlet

called *Hitler als Feldherr* ("Hitler as War Lord") that became a best-seller overnight. Its crudely designed black and red cover bore a full-length photograph of Hitler in his well-known wartime attire; there was nothing in the outward appearance of the book to distinguish it from one of Dr. Goebbels' publications and much that unashamedly reminded one of them. The cover was deceptive—by intention. Its author turned out to be a man with a grievance and, far from trying to glorify Hitler as "war lord," he aimed to destroy the legend of Hitler's military genius. He was sixty-five-year-old General Franz Halder, chief of staff of the German army from September 1938 until September 1942, when he was dismissed for his refusal—or failure—to carry out the Fuehrer's orders in Russia.

Halder's thesis is that the German general staff was at bottom a sound, businesslike organization, and well able to finish off the Russians but for Hitler's amateurish interference. He insists that the officers and men of the Third Reich's army have nothing with which to reproach themselves, either morally or militarily, but a great deal with which to reproach Hitler. "He was a blunderer," Halder says, and proves it by an analysis of all the main campaigns. "He was a bandit and marauder. He hated professional officers because of their deep inner ties to Christianity, professional ethics, and tradition." Hitler lacked "the freely creative genius of the genuine war lord. He had ideas, but there is a great difference between having ideas and being a divinely inspired military leader." He went to rash extremes because he lacked "divine inspiration and blessing for his undertakings, that humble obeisance before God" which characterized men like Bismarck, Moltke, and Schlieffen, the war lords whom Halder holds up as shining examples.

The meaning is clear: the Second World War was in itself not necessarily a bad thing, and could have been a success had the professionals been allowed to run it. Halder's pamphlet warns young Germans itching to be soldiers not to entrust themselves to a godless adventurer next time, but only to

God-fearing professionals who know their jobs. They will then remain in the "true German tradition." Halder's pamphlet appeared in May 1949, and it misjudged the psychological situation. Although tension between East and West had sharpened and, with the blockade of Berlin, very nearly reached the exploding point, there were no young Germans itching to be soldiers again. Nevertheless, the pamphlet had one important result: it brought the discussion of military affairs back to the attention of ordinary citizens. It was the opening move in the campaign for the remilitarization of political thinking in Western Germany.

BUT even so, things got under way very slowly. General Hans Speidel's sober, restrained, and rather elegant account of the Allied invasion of Western Europe, *Invasion 1944*, which was published in the autumn of 1949, did not repeat the crudities of Halder's argument, but its main thesis was broadly the same. This book's main interest lay in the portrait it drew of Rommel, and the position it assigned to the officer corps in the struggle against Hitler's uncontrolled "amateurishness." Speidel showed sympathy with the conspirators of July 20, 1944, indicating that Rommel had been in contact with them, but was careful not to identify his own circle too closely with the actual plotters. How much deliberate calculation there was in all this is hard to say, but in the harsher light of 1951 the care with which Speidel skirts tricky issues does not seem accidental.

The books of Halder and Speidel caused little more than a ripple. Then the Korean war broke out, and the parallel between a divided Korea and a divided Germany was too close to be ignored, while the problem of Western Germany's contribution to its own and European defense brought remilitarization into the open. Suddenly, that well-known figure, "our military correspondent," reappeared in all the larger respectable newspapers of Western Germany. Nor were the generals far behind.

The last twelve months have released the generals' writings and memoirs in a veritable

spate, and it ought not surprise us that this vast and splendidly published literature is received with more interest than it would have been a year ago. The aim of most of these books is perfectly clear. If the Federal Republic is, after all, to participate in the defense of Western Europe, it will need officers. It is all very well for the Western powers to declare that there will be no German general staff, or for Dr. Adenauer to state that he does not wish to fall back on any of the top-ranking leaders of the last war. The fact remains that outside the Speidels, Heusingers, Schwerins, Westphals, Manteuffels, and Guderians, Dr. Adenauer has few men of military authority and experience to offer the West. And these generals have announced that they are available.

THE generals, on the whole, agree with Chancellor Adenauer that the defense of Western Europe is one and indivisible, that neutralism would be futile, and that the Federal Republic is not only under a moral obligation to assume its share in joint defense but that it would also be well advised to claim it, since along with this would go an important, if not decisive, voice in military planning councils. They are also agreed with the Chancellor that German participation in Atlantic defense can only proceed on a basis of fully restored national sovereignty and complete political equality. The military men undoubtedly advocate political equality because it would clear the way to the reestablishment of a German fighting force. The Chancellor, on his part, probably insists on a German share in Atlantic defense—which he may not regard as particularly desirable in itself—because it would clear the way for Western Germany's full political equality among the nations. The question is: who is driving whom at Bonn?

The question has no obvious answer, and in any case, for the moment, these ex-generals and politicians still find themselves distressingly isolated. They know that were they permitted today, or even asked, to raise a German army, the vast majority of their potential recruits would turn away with a

shrug. Some would refuse unconditionally because they did not want to serve in an army again under any circumstances. Some would insist on first having their reputations as honorable fighting men officially restored and recognized by their own political leaders and by the Allies. Some would refuse because they had lost all confidence in their former leaders, either feeling that these had been Nazi tools who "betrayed" them in the field, or else suspecting that it was they who had "betrayed" Hitler.

It is these latter doubts, especially, that have to be cleared up before a start can be made by the German military men and before the Bonn government can have an indispensable counter in the diplomatic game. The present tide of military memoirs is designed exactly to defend the generals and admirals against two contradictory accusations: that they stabbed Germany in the back by blindly following Hitler, and that they stabbed Germany in the back by sabotaging Hitler's war effort.

This literature displays much self-assurance and no little skill in the double-talk required. Compared with it, General Halder's path-breaking pamphlet appears crude, short-sighted, unintelligent. More daring than Halder, these later writers aim at proving not only that Germany's military leaders were blameless for the outbreak of the late war and its subsequent suicidal conduct, but also that they are today, morally and technically, the best men for the new job at hand.

GENERAL SIEGFRIED WESTPHAL is a professional soldier who served under the Kaiser, the Weimar Republic, and Hitler, advancing from ensign to lieutenant-general. In the last war, he was successively chief of staff to Rommel in North Africa, Kesselring in Italy, and Rundstedt on the Western invasion front. His comparatively short book, *Heer in Fesseln* ("Army in Chains"), falls into two parts; the first deals with the development, structure, and general mentality of the German army during the last thirty years; the second, with the author's three main campaigns. The latter is of little interest

since it contains no factual information not already known from other sources. The first part is all the more instructive.

Westphal has a sure instinct as to how much his average German ex-soldier reader is prepared to swallow, and where and when not to tread on any particular corn. Unlike Halder, he abuses no one. He despises Hitler but does not call him names. He is contemptuous of Keitel but does not insult him. He is critical of the Western Allies, but readily concedes that some lessons can be learned from their war record. He bestows praise but glorifies no one, not even Rommel, whom he genuinely admires. Intriguingly enough, he has not a single word of comment on the Soviet Union.

Westphal makes no stupid claims. He studiously refrains from even so much as implying that Germany ever had a chance of winning the war but for Hitler's blunders. He makes a passing reference to "threats from Poland and Czechoslovakia"—which is indispensable if he wishes to catch the ear and gain the confidence of the German refugees* from these countries—but he stops there. For the rest, he makes no bones about Germany's having been the aggressor throughout, but asserts that her army, especially in the case of Poland and Russia, was unaware of this and genuinely believed that it had been attacked or at least provoked.

The title of his book states the general's alibi: the German army was "in fetters," and never free to play its appointed role as a loyal servant of the nation. It was fettered in two ways—by its own ill-conceived and misguided "tradition," and by Hitler. The second followed logically from the first. The army's ill-conceived tradition had its roots in an exaggerated interpretation of General von Seeckt's originally sound thesis that the soldier must be a strictly non-political animal. The result was an army that blindly obeyed the political leaders of the state, no matter who they were. This non-political education, argues the general, "led to indifference and complete lack of judgment with regard to political matters among even the highest-ranking officers. What was only right and

proper, and even beneficial, under the Weimar Republic was to have unforeseeable and fatal consequences under the dictatorship." It prevented the army from recognizing Hitler for what he was, and Hitler in turn revealed himself "as a master at exploiting the political naivety of the army for his own ends." Seeckt could not have foreseen that the army's "sense of duty, complete devotion to the nation, and absolute subordination to the authority of the state would one day be abused in this manner." Hitler managed to trap the Wehrmacht in its own tight-fitting and all too rigid code of honor, and finally strangled it.

THIS is the key argument expounded more or less by all current German military writers. By no means does it explain everything, but it does explain just what the German ex-soldier wants to have explained, and it does so adequately to the purpose. This ordinary German soldier acted "in good faith and to the best of his conscience and belief; for him there could be no distinction between a 'just' and an 'unjust' war. He fought and bled not for the aims of the Nazi party, but felt bound, like the soldiers of all nations, to serve his country." Where Westphal differs from some of his writing fellow officers is that he does not offer the same excuses for the top-ranking military leaders as for the common soldiers. "The duty of army commanders does not exhaust itself in strict military obedience. Over and above this they are charged with a higher, political responsibility towards the nation." In other words, it is their duty not only to act but also, on occasions, to think, and in this they failed.

Westphal goes down the whole list of questions likely to be raised by his ex-soldiers, and tries to answer them all. On the responsibility of the officer corps for the war itself, he quotes the well-known verdict of the Nuremberg Military Tribunal that the German general staff and supreme command could not be regarded as criminal organizations guilty of conspiring and planning for war, and he adds that "it was the tragedy of the German officer corps that it was forced

into a war which it desired just as little as did the German people." But he is even more specific and emphatic in answering the charge that the army was betrayed by its leaders—an indication that this is a sore point with many ex-soldiers. He terms all stories of sabotage, connivance with the enemy, or open betrayal in the field, "fairy tales, results of the whispering propaganda of the Nazi party, or concoctions of an overheated imagination."

All this leads him to make an interesting point in connection with the attempt of July 20, 1944 on Hitler's life. It is true, he contends, that Germany suffered particularly heavy losses during the last six months of the war, and that it would have been spared these if the attempt to unseat Hitler and bring the war to a quick end had succeeded. But, he says, "it is to be feared that the majority of the German people would soon have forgotten the great advantages of an earlier end of the fighting and would have blamed the Wehrmacht for the hard fate the German people would have had to endure in any case. It would have been said then that the Wehrmacht had betrayed the nation in its most critical hour, and this legend would have prevailed over the truth."

It is a shrewd argument that very ingeniously takes into account the desperately ambivalent attitude of those it is trying to persuade, who must, somehow, clear themselves of the charges both of being responsible for Hitler and of being disloyal to him.

GENERAL ADOLF HEUSINGER, who with Speidel represents the Bonn government in the military discussions with the West, is, like Westphal, a professional soldier. In Hitler's army he was chief of operations in the army general staff, a key position for the observation of the moral climate of the army during the critical years. He was present at the conference of July 29, 1944 in Hitler's headquarters at Rastenburg, at which Colonel Stauffenberg's bomb exploded. Heusinger was knocked unconscious, recovered to be arrested for suspected complicity, and was later released for lack of evidence.

His book itself, *Befehl im Widerstreit*, is a curious literary hybrid. Its title alone defies translation and is well-nigh meaningless even in German. "*Befehl im Widerstreit*," if it means anything at all, may mean "Conflicting Orders," or it may mean the moral conflicts aroused by orders that one is in duty bound to obey, but which hurt one's sense of honor. It may mean both, and it may mean neither. This semantic confusion faithfully reflects the muddleheadedness of the author and his book—a series of nearly one hundred movie-like scenes and dialogues tracing the fate of the German army from 1923 to 1945.

But the book's cloudiness, which accords so ill with military language, may be deliberate, and it is possible that the general's readers will respond gratefully to his articulation of their confusion. An abundance of equivocation is especially useful when discussing the plot of July 20, 1944.

THIS is really the issue at the bottom of all these *apologiae*. The July 20, 1944 plot has established itself as a kind of tuning fork of German political and military morality, and it vibrates through all the memoirs of the former diplomats, politicians, and military leaders of the Hitler regime. All other problems are inextricably tied up with it, radiate from it, or tend to be drawn towards it. What the moral code of the future German army will be like, what its position within the framework of the state and in relation to its civilian government is going to be—in short, what the value of a future West German fighting force will be to the Atlantic powers in terms of genuine devotion to the common cause—it is not too much to say that all this very largely depends on how the crucial questions of basic loyalties and national ideals bound up with the July 20 attempt are finally decided in the German mind.

The legend that the German generals stabbed Hitler's army in the back is certainly in contradiction to the known facts. The same legend, with the Jews and Socialists as villains, was also in contradiction to the known facts after World War I. Contradic-

toriness did not kill the legend then, and it does not kill its successor, though it seeks new villains. It is stirring again—rather violently—on the extreme right wing; and, significantly, the writing generals do not dare attack the legend wholeheartedly. Which only shows that, in the mind of the common ex-soldier whom General Remer—the man who put down the July 20 revolt in Berlin—is trying to attract to his neo-Nazi German Reich party, the issue is still far from settled. Remer and his associates have publicly referred to the plotters of July 20, 1944 as "*diese Lumpen*"—"those scoundrels."

There is no doubt that, in the words of a Munich paper, "a major subterranean propaganda machine is being geared up for the task of libeling the men of July 20 and blaming them for Germany's defeat, of accusing them of being traitors to their country, and demanding that they be denied the right of political activity." What, asks the Munich paper, is the object of this campaign? It cannot prove that the German armies were not defeated. But it can suggest that those who supported Hitler to the end were the "best" Germans, and that the political, and thereby, implicitly, the military future should lie with them, rather than with those opposed to Hitler. This is, undoubtedly, the prime purpose of Remer and his friends. The survivors of the Resistance are discovering, as all evidence from Germany now shows, that the majority of Germans, in spite of their protestations of disgust with Hitler immediately after the war, still identify themselves with the Nazi version of the rightness of the German cause. And if this is how most of the men who are to be "soldiers of Europe" still feel about this crucial issue, what are Generals Westphal and Heusinger going to do about it? The answer is: while seeming to do much, they scrupulously do nothing.

GENERAL WESTPHAL refers but briefly to July 20, 1944. He explains the fact that most of the conspiring generals belonged to the general staff by the "unbridgeable differences" between this department of the army

and Hitler. "These men were inspired by the best of motives. They risked and sacrificed their lives for Germany. Yet it must be very strongly doubted whether they estimated the feelings of the people and the Wehrmacht correctly. What was their attitude? Many soldiers were in despair over the dilettantism of the supreme military leadership. For many reasons they would have welcomed a change in the political system. But it never occurred to them to bring it about themselves. In 1944, furthermore, Hitler still enjoyed much support among the people. The majority of the nation certainly did not regard him as a criminal. Even if the attempt had been successful it is very doubtful whether the navy and Luftwaffe would have joined the conspirators, and large sections of the army would have likewise refused to follow them. For all these reasons, even a less inadequately prepared and more successful putsch would in all certainty have led to the disintegration of the Wehrmacht, civil war in the interior, and most likely to general chaos. Nor is there any indication that less onerous conditions would have been imposed on Germany if she had collapsed in the middle of 1944 through internal revolt. Mistrust of those allied against us and mistrust in our own ranks were much too deep-rooted for that."

So what does Westphal say? He says precisely nothing at all. Whichever way the cat finally jumps, he won't be found altogether on the wrong side.

Heusinger touches upon July 20 in the last of his flowery little one-act plays. A dismissed general discusses the question of further resistance with a leader of the Volkssturm, an elderly man, in April 1945. Says the Volkssturm commander: "You're telling me to offer no further resistance. All right. But why did the high-up military leaders do nothing to bring the fighting to an end long ago, before we came to this pass?" The general's answer runs briefly like this:

"I have been expecting this question. This is the reproach that will be made against us tomorrow and in the future. There were two possible lines of action for those among the generals who had a more or less compre-

hensive view of the over-all situation. They could either try, faithful to their sworn oaths, to avert the disaster by giving sound, expert advice—this depended on whether and to what extent the supreme leaders were prepared to listen to them—or they could use violence against their own supreme commander, in defiance of the laws of military obedience. Many officers have tried the first way, without success. In a manner never before experienced, Hitler abused their loyalty, which was founded in simple soldier's ethics. There remains the way of violence. It is questionable whether a forcible removal of Hitler was still actually possible after the army had quietly accepted the murder of Schleicher in 1934 and the dismissal of Beck and Fritsch in 1938. Once the war had begun with overwhelming successes for Hitler, such an act of violence would undoubtedly have led to civil war. Yet some officers chose this path. It led to July 20. They acted in order to save the people from further suffering. But they knew that the mass of the people condemned their action because they still believed blindly in the Fuehrer. Not only that. The majority of soldiers at the front rejected this step. They visualized their salvation only through a determined common stand against the external enemy, and Hitler was the symbol of this determination.

"And finally: the officer acts against his oath of loyalty. How can he then demand obedience from his subordinates? He breaks faith. Who is then to keep faith with him? In the eyes of many he sullies his honor. How can he hope for honorable behavior among his men? He has sworn an oath. True, the man to whom he has sworn it has grossly abused it. But is the officer thereby released? The oath is more than a formality. It was sworn before God. But can God demand that such an oath should be kept? Did not the terrible ordeal of our people require that that faith, so grossly misused, should be broken? This is where the conflict of conscience lies. Everyone had to solve it in his own heart. There was no solution in principle, valid for all—only tragic, insoluble contradictions of duty."

The dramatization of the conflict, we see, does not much advance its solution. General Heusinger remains true to the traditional German saying: whatever one does is bound to turn out wrong. Or right—as the case may be.

VICE-ADMIRAL KURT ASSMANN takes a similar, even more non-compromising stand. His *Deutsche Schicksalsjahre* ("Years of German Fate") is an operational history of the Second World War, the first of its kind to appear in Germany, and probably about as full and objective an account as one could hope to get from a German military pen so soon after the end of hostilities. Assmann's verdicts on political issues, however, are almost always naive.

He does not possess the gift of skepticism. It is almost alarming to watch him take one tall statement after another of Hitler's at face value and burst into righteous indignation when they turn out to be bluff, propaganda, or just uncontrolled, maniacal raving. It is, of course, not Assmann's fault that Hitler was not an honest politician; but can he escape blame for never quite getting round to finding this out? And how many will share his view that "it was the higher historic mission of the German intervention in Norway to bring about the inclusion of the racially related Norwegian people in the Germanic community of fate, which rested on a common spiritual and ethical basis"?

Nevertheless, the scholarly virtues of the admiral's book have won it wide acclaim, and what he has to say with regard to the events of July 20, 1944—especially since, like Heusinger, he was present at Hitler's headquarters when the bomb exploded—and its underlying moral issues will undoubtedly have influence.

In certain serious cases, the admiral argues, revolt by the armed forces against the head of state can be justified in time of peace. But in war the armed forces of any state on earth have but one task: to achieve victory. Anything liable to deflect them from this is immoral and reprehensible. Assmann admits that "in the higher regions where politics and

the conduct of war are gradually merging, additional responsibilities, besides purely military ones, are placed on an officer, especially in the political sphere"; and that cases can arise in practice "where dire need compels him to deviate from the principle." The salvation of the people and the nation must rank above everything else, and the admiral pertinently quotes Hitler's own *Mein Kampf*, which says plainly: "If the instruments of governmental power are driving a people or nation into disaster and annihilation, the rebellion of every individual member of such a people becomes not only his right but even his duty."

Assmann insists, however, that the oath of loyalty given to Hitler by the army and navy was a great stumbling block for such action. To break this oath was a betrayal, and he adds: "Politicians gladly make use of any betrayal but they invariably despise the traitor. We may rest assured that in the future our former enemies will prefer to deal with Germans who kept their oath rather than with those who broke it."

This is the operative sentence in the admiral's book. He makes it clear that, personally, he condemned the attempt of July 20 for "ethical reasons" and also because its ultimate purpose, which might have justified it despite these ethical objections—namely, the preservation of the German people from threatened annihilation—could no longer have been attained in view of the Allied demand for unconditional surrender. And he ends by paying tribute *both* to those whose consciences demanded that they should break their oaths and to "the great masses of those who placed their oaths above all else."

GENERAL HEINZ GUDERIAN, another professional soldier, commanding officer in two world wars, creator and leader of Hitler's armored divisions, and his last chief of the army general staff, a bluff, crude, bellowing technician of war, does not involve himself in any such subtleties. Throughout the 450 pages of his *Erinnerungen eines Soldaten* ("Memories of a Soldier"), the problem of the oath of loyalty does not rise to bother

Guderian at all, nor does the whole tangled conflict of conscience raised by the revolt of July 20 exist for him.

"Personally," says the former Panzer general, "I reject murder in every form or shape. Our Christian religion lays down an unequivocal command in this respect. For this reason alone I cannot approve of the attempt. But apart from this religious consideration, it is clear to me that all political prerequisites were lacking for the successful outcome of such an attempt. One thing is certain: at that time a large part of the German people still believed firmly in Hitler, and had the attempt succeeded they would have been convinced that the conspirators had eliminated the only man still capable of bringing the war to a tolerable end. And the onus would have been on the officer corps, the generals, and the general staff, during the war and afterwards. The hatred and contempt of our people would have turned against the soldiers. I have seen German soldiers in two wars. The way they fought, faithful unto death, faithful to their oaths despite threatening defeat—that is the way I wish them to remain. Only through such faithfulness, through such sense of sacrifice and quiet heroism can a strong and healthy nation and state be reborn."

There is little Dr. Adenauer can do with that answer, as indeed there is not much he can do with anything Guderian writes these days. But Dr. Adenauer and his military advisers are likewise aware that it is upon their own answer to the question of the bindingness of the oath of loyalty to Hitler that they will finally be judged—by their own people as well as by their prospective allies and equals. For Adenauer the issue takes on an additional complication: what sort of oath of loyalty can the future German soldier of an Atlantic army—who may at any time find himself firing on his kin on the other side of the Elbe—be asked to swear and be expected to keep?

Europäische Sicherheit, in a recent issue, attempts in a lengthy article on "The Spirit of a German Contingent," by Dr. Robert Knauss, to solve the difficulty. The author

explains to his ex-soldier readers that they must revise their ideas. There can be no question of resurrecting the old molds and spirit of the Weimar Reichswehr or the Third Reich's Wehrmacht. Dr. Knauss says that the Weimar Reichswehr was "a state within the state" and "instinctively rejected parliamentary democracy"; he calls it plain, downright "militarism if the armed forces exercise decisive influence upon policy, if the hand holding the weapon . . . presumes to the right to lead the body of the state." Two basic things must therefore be asked of the future West German soldier. First, he must unconditionally accept the overriding authority of the political leadership as embodied in a civilian defense minister responsible to parliament. The rejoinder, that soldiers and generals followed Hitler's policy so abjectly precisely because they accepted his overriding political authority, is countered with the second demand, that the "new German soldier must be imbued with the firm conviction that, despite all its deficiencies and shortcomings, the democratic state and parliamentary forms of government are, in the last resort, always preferable to a totalitarian leader state."

SUCH a program, emanating from the Bonn government, appears reasonable enough, and is doubtless similar to what any American or British statesman would answer if asked about a soldier's responsibility. The trouble is in finding anyone in Germany to believe in it. General Guderian, for one, does not.

In addition to his war memoirs, Guderian has published two solid pamphlets dealing with postwar military affairs. In the first, *Kann Westeuropa verteidigt werden?* ("Can Western Europe Be Defended?"), he discusses mainly the defense plans of the Atlantic powers; in the second pamphlet, which bears the emphatic title *So geht es nicht!* ("It Can't Be Done That Way!"), he lists the conditions for a successful defense of the West. These naturally include a number of German claims.

Guderian presents himself, rather loudly, as the spokesman of the German common

soldier, whose case, in his view, is being cynically ignored by those who now want to reenlist him. Here, as in the field of technical warfare, he feels that the time has come now for the expert—who will eventually have to cope with the results of all this bungling loose talk anyhow—to speak out and correct the perspective. Guderian asserts that against Russia's 175 fighting divisions, which in case of war can be expanded to 500, the continental Western European powers have a mere 18, and these but on paper, for only eight of them would actually be available on a central front. Only an enormous increase in the strength of the Western occupation troops, plus a very substantial German contribution, can, says Guderian, alter this depressing picture and overcome the "crisis in European defense." Allied preparations so far amount, he thinks, to no more than "road-blocks against an oncoming pursuer," and the French idea of holding a line until the mass of the Allied armies is brought up is plainly laughable, whether that line runs along the Elbe or the Rhine. In other words, nothing can be done without the Germans—but, with them, everything may yet be saved. What, then, should the conditions be on which the German soldier could consider fighting?

The demands Guderian sets forth are political, military, economic, and psychological. None of these, he claims, has so far been met. Public opinion in Germany must cease to play the Allies' game by "slandering" German veterans. "If the Federal Chancellor expects the old soldiers to support his policy of making a German contribution to the defense of Western Europe, he must see to it that there is no more of this infamous defamation." What is more, he must see that the veterans are given proper pensions and not left to rot and ruin—else he will get "not really efficient soldiers but merely a handful of mercenaries and poor unemployed beggars."

So much for the veterans. As for the younger generation, if Dr. Adenauer wants willing volunteers, he must "convince them that they will be defending *their* Germany, *their* mothers and sisters, *their* homes and

their property, not merely the Rhine or the Pyrenees or some other remnant of an as yet wholly unreal Western Europe." There must be full sovereignty, of course: the Federal Republic must be accepted into the Atlantic community as an equal partner, but there must also be—this is only implied—a German government in which the soldiers can have confidence. Guderian, although he nowhere says so explicitly, leaves little doubt that the present Bonn government does not answer this description.

Guderian has no use for Eisenhower, either. He does not quarrel over military matters, but picks a political bone with him: "General Eisenhower suggests that Germany should receive equality ultimately and when she has proved that she has deserved it. He tries to comfort us with noncommittal prospects for the future. That is no use to us whatever." Then, after massive diatribes against Britain, France, Bonn, everybody and anybody (with the careful exception of the Soviet Union, about which and against which not a word is uttered), he ends up with a plea—to the United States. He ap-

peals to her "to secure for Germany full and unqualified equality in every respect here and now; to make no important decisions affecting Germany without the cooperation and approval of Germany; and to enforce the decisions taken in our favor against the resistance of other powers—because we are convinced that only in this way can Western Europe be saved, if need be, against the wishes of the Western Europeans themselves!"

GUDERIAN'S war memoirs did not disturb the Bonn planners much, but his two pamphlets have actually frightened them. With cautious severity, *Europäische Sicherheit* takes him to task. His technical advice, an editorial suggests, would undoubtedly be valuable were it not offset by his unwarranted "incursions into the political field." That is militarism, it declares, which has nothing to do with soldierly ethics. But whether or not it actually does have something to do with the soldierly ethics of the new German army we shall probably not have to wait too long to find out.